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1.5(c)
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28 January 1968

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CIA/DIA/STATE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Reactions to Certain US Actions

1. In this memorandum we consider some recent developments in North Korean, Soviet and Chinese policy in connection with the Korean crisis and the possible reactions of these countries to several US courses of action.

I. DEVELOPMENTS IN COMMUNIST POLICY

2. The attack on the Blue House in Seoul and the seizure of the Pueblo are the most flagrant and conspicuous manifestations of an aggressive policy of armed subversion against the ROK developed by Kim Il-Sung since the fall of 1966. This policy aims at the eventual reunification of Korea by revolutionary violence, and is designed to exploit the current US and ROK involvement in Vietnam to this end.

3. In the current crisis they have apparently acted independently and probably intend to keep the affair in their own hands insofar as they can. The influence of China in the

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present circumstances is marginal, and the influence of the Soviets in Pyongyang, though greater than Peking's, is not decisive. The Soviets have considerable potential leverage, but they would be unlikely to apply severe pressures on North Korea unless they thought hostilities on a continuing and extended scale were becoming likely. They would be reluctant to risk the recovery of their influence with the Asian Communist parties, a goal they have been seeking for several years, unless they believed that a major danger to their own security was developing.

4. In the last week, the North Koreans have maintained a consistently hard and unyielding public position. However, there is, in private statements through the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, some suggestion of a willingness to bargain for the release of the Pueblo's crew. We judge that the North Koreans wish to avoid military retaliation and a possible resumption of hostilities in Korea. Their primary concern is to manipulate the crisis so as to discredit the US and complicate US-ROK relations.

5. The USSR and China probably approve these immediate North Korean aims, though they may have concern over Pyongyang's tactical handling of the crisis. They may even be concerned

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that a prolonged crisis or possible hostilities in Korea would adversely effect Communist prospects in Vietnam by encouraging a general hardening of US policy in Asia. Both the Soviets and Chinese have thus far refrained from involving themselves directly. The Chinese, after remaining virtually silent for several days, have offered only pro forma support, mainly because of their severely strained relations with Kim Il-Sung, and perhaps because of their own confused internal situation. In public the Soviets have maintained a general support for Pyongyang, but without adding to the tensions. They did pass a US message to Pyongyang and through calculated leaks they have endeavored to hint at the possibility that the Pueblo incident could be settled peacefully if the US made some concessions.

[REDACTED]

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